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Dr. Md. Khalilur Rahman
BRAC Robotics

Dr. Md. Khalilur Rahman pursued his PhD in Information Engineering from Japan. It was there that his childhood dream of building a robot resurfaced with full vigour. After he returned to Bangladesh and accepted the post of Assistant Professor in the Computer Science and Engineering School of BRAC University, his dream became a reality. The BRACU-CHONDROBOT was the first lunar excavation robot to be built as the first project by BRAC University's robotics team. What is surprising is the success that this machine has fetched from NASA's second annual Lunabotics Mining Competition held in May last year. The CHONDROBOT survived immense competition and was one of the final 25 teams, picked out of 48 participating squads handpicked from 72 different challengers from all around the world. Even giants such as McGill and Harvard were cut out from the final selection for not being able to meet specifications!

The 36-year-old professor is very proud of his team. They worked exceptionally well even though they didn't have well equipped laboratories, resources, or even materials to work with. Everything had to be made from scratch using parts bought and recycled from Dholaikhaal. He is still hopeful of gaining connections in international markets, collaborating with industries for experience in application, and receiving funding along with collaboration from the government, well-off companies and other universities with resources and knowledge in the field.

Dr. Md. Khalilur Rahman and his inspiring team comprises of Dr. Mohammed Belal Hossain Bhuian, Dr. Md. Mosaddeque Rahman, students of BRAC: Shiblee Imtiaz Hasan, Mohammad Jonayet Hossain, Kazi Mohammad Razin, Mahmudul Hasan Oyon and Md. Asifur Rahman, and volunteers, Eftakhar Karim Rahat, Imran Bin Jafar and Nirjhor Tahmidur Rouf. They are all dedicated to improving the designs to introduce CHONDROBOT2 in this year's NASA competition, hoping to fetch better accolades and international attention. The team is also working on projects such as 3rd Generation CAR Security Systems, Next Generation CAR, Robots for Agricultural Work (Automatic Plantation), All Terrain Rescue Robots and Humanoid Robots.

He says, “We are already far behind the developed countries in every sector, especially in research. Most of the researchers of good universities and laboratories abroad are from South Asia, but in their home countries, they don't get enough opportunities for research. BRAC University is providing us with those facilities. These kinds of projects are very helpful for knowledge exchange between teachers and students; secondly, universities will be able to collaborate on research with next generation technological institutes like NASA; our next generation students will get inspiration on research and development, and lastly, we may be able to believe that nothing is impossible for us.”

Dr. Khalil never stopped dreaming, and had taken a leap of faith when he started his research in robotics with his brilliant team. He had one last thing to say, “Do not stop dreaming.”

Compiled by Star Correspondent